Remarks

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in view of the above amendments and in light of the following remarks and discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 7-15, 22-27, 34-40, and 53-55 are currently pending in the application; Claims 7-11, 13-15, 22, 23, 25-27, 34, 36, 38-40, and 53-55 having been amended by way of the present response. Applicants respectfully assert that support for the changes to the claims is self-evident from the originally filed disclosure, including the original claims, and that therefore no new matter has been added.

In the outstanding Office Action Claims 9 and 40 were objected to; Claim 10 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112; Claims 7, 9, 22, 24, 25, 27, 34-40, and 53-55 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,400,463 to Kitamura et al. (Kitamura);[1] Claims 8, 23, and 26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kitamura in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,081,342 to Nakai et al. (Nakai); Claims 10, 12, 13, and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kitamura in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,797,706 to Sugishima et al. (Sugishima); and Claims 11 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kitamura in view of Sugishima, and further in view of Nakai.

As stated above Claims 9 and 40 were objected to because of informalities. In response, Applicants have amended the claims in a non-narrowing manner to recite "slave" in place of the previous recitations of "salve." Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the objections to Claims 9 and 40 be withdrawn.

As stated above Claim 10 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. In response, Applicants have amended the claim to remove the recitation of "the non-executable

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[1] Although page 3, paragraph 9 of the Office Action indicates that "Claims 53 and 55 are rejected," Applicants respectfully assert that the rejection is understood to apply to Claim 54, in view of the discussion on page 4 of the Office Action.

function." Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of Claim 10 under 35

U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, be withdrawn.

As stated above Claims 7, 9, 22, 24, 25, 27, 34-40, and 53-55 were rejected under 35

U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Kitamura. Claims 8, 23, and 26 were rejected under

35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kitamura in view of Nakai. Claims 10, 12,

13, and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kitamura in

view of Sugishima. Claims 11 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being

unpatentable over Kitamura in view of Sugishima, and further in view of Nakai. Applicants

respectfully assert that the amendments to the claims have overcome the rejections for the

following reasons.

The present invention is directed to image formation systems (e.g., as recited in

independent Claims 7, 13, 25, 38, and 53), as well as image formation apparatuses (e.g.,

independent Claims 10, 22, 34, and 36). Independent Claim 7 recites a slave machine

configured to report functions available in the slave machine to a master machine, and the

master machine configured to inhibit operation in a link copy mode when an unusable

function is selected in the link copy mode after the link copy mode has been selected.

Independent Claim 10 recites an image forming apparatus configured to not display in a link

copy mode a key to permit selection of an unusable function in the link copy mode after the

link copy mode has been selected. Independent Claim 13 recites a master machine

configured to not display in a link copy mode a key to permit selection of an unusable

function in the link copy mode after the link copy mode has been selected. Independent

Claim 22 recites an image forming apparatus configured to cancel in a link copy mode a

mode to permit execution of an unusable function in an image formation apparatus or an

other image formation apparatus when the mode is selected in the link copy mode after the

link copy mode has been selected in the image formation apparatus or the other image

formation apparatus. Independent Claim 25 recites a master machine configured to cancel a mode to permit execution of an unusable function in the master machine or a slave machine when the mode is selected in a link copy mode after the link copy mode has been selected in the master machine or the slave machine. Independent Claim 34 recites an image forming apparatus configured to inhibit operation in a link copy mode when an unusable function is selected in the link copy mode after the link copy mode has been selected and an other image formation apparatus is not in a state where data communications can be executed. Independent Claim 36 recites an image forming apparatus configured to inhibit operation in a link copy mode when an unusable function is selected in the link copy mode after the link copy mode has been selected. Independent Claim 38 recites a master machine configured to inhibit an operation in a link copy mode when an unusable function is selected in the link copy mode after the link copy mode has been selected and a slave machine is not in data communications executable state. Independent Claim 53 recites a master machine configured to inhibit operation in a link copy mode when an unusable function is selected in the link copy mode after the link copy mode has been selected and when a slave machine is not in a state where data communication can be executed.

Regarding the rejection of independent Claim 7, Kitamura is directed to an image processing system. As shown in Figure 1, for example, of Kitamura, stations (digital copying machines) 1001 to 1004 are connected with each other with communication cables 1005 to 1007.[2] In a case where a station from which a user tries to output cannot output an image for any reasons such as short of paper, a message saying that "the station cannot be used" is displayed, and the station cannot be selected as a receiving-side station of the image data.

Applicants respectfully assert, however, that Kitamura does not teach or suggest the claimed features of inhibiting operation in a link copy mode when an unusable function is

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[2] Column 3, lines 35-57.

<u>selected</u> in the link copy mode after the link copy mode has been selected, as recited in

independent Claim 7. Specifically, Applicants respectfully assert that <u>Kitamura</u> does not

show or state selecting a link copy mode, and inhibiting operation in the link copy mode

<u>when an unusable function is selected</u> (i.e., at the time the unusable function is selected,

rather than subsequent to that time). Rather, Applicants respectfully assert that <u>Kitamura</u> at

most shows that <u>after</u> a user tries to output the image that cannot be output, the station is

indicated as not being able to be selected.

In particular, independent Claim 7 recites "said master machine is configured to

inhibit operation in the link copy mode when an unusable function is selected in the link copy

mode after the link copy mode has been selected." Thus, Applicants respectfully request that

the rejection of Claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) be withdrawn, and the independent claim

allowed.

Applicants respectfully assert that, for reasons similar to those discussed above with

respect to independent Claim 7, <u>Kitamura</u> does not teach or suggest the claimed features

recited in independent Claims 22, 25, 34, 36, 38, and 53. Thus, Applicants respectfully

request that the rejection of independent Claims 22, 25, 34, 36, 38, and 53 under 35 U.S.C. §

102(e) be withdrawn, and the allowance of independent Claims 22, 25, 34, 36, 38, and 53.

Regarding the rejection of independent Claims 10 and 13, for reasons similar to those

discussed above with respect to independent Claim 7, Applicants respectfully assert that

<u>Kitamura</u> does not teach or suggest the claimed features of <u>not displaying</u> in a link copy mode

<u>a key to permit selection of an unusable function</u> in the link copy mode after the link copy

mode has been selected, as recited in the independent claim. Rather, as discussed above,

Applicants respectfully assert that <u>Kitamura</u> at most shows that <u>after</u> a user tries to output the

image that cannot be output (i.e., after a user has selected a function), the station is indicated

as not being able to be selected.

Specifically, independent Claim 10 recites "the image forming apparatus is configured to not display in a link copy mode a key to permit selection of an unusable function in the link copy mode after the link copy mode has been selected," and independent Claim 13 recites "said master machine is configured to not display in a link copy mode a key to permit selection of an unusable function in the link copy mode after the link copy mode has been selected."

The Office Action relies on Sugishima in an attempt to remedy the deficiencies of Kitamura. Applicants respectfully assert that Sugishima does not remedy these deficiencies, however, for the following reasons.

Sugishima is directed to a multi-image processing system with central control. Sugishima states that when an all printer operation mode for performing simultaneous operation of all printers is selected, it is then checked if all the designated printers are available through various checking steps.[3]

Applicants respectfully assert, however, that Sugishima does not teach or suggest the claimed features of not displaying in a link copy mode a key to permit selection of an unusable function in the link copy mode after the link copy mode has been selected, as recited in independent Claims 10 and 13. Rather, Applicants respectfully assert that Sugishima at most shows that after the all printer operation mode is selected (i.e., after a user has selected a function), it is then checked if all the designated printers are available.

Thus, for the above reasons, Applicants respectfully assert that neither Kitamura nor Sugishima, whether taken alone or in combination, teach or suggest the claimed features recited in independent Claims 10 and 13. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of independent Claims 10 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn, and the allowance of independent Claims 10 and 13.

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[3] Column 15, lines 42-46.

Applicants respectfully assert that Claims 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 23, 24, 26, 27, 35, 37, 39, 40, 54, and 55 are allowable for the same reasons as the independent claims from which they depend, as well as for their own features. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections of dependent Claims 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 23, 24, 26, 27, 35, 37, 39, 40, 54, and 55 under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(e) and 103(a) be withdrawn, and the allowance of dependent Claims 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 23, 24, 26, 27, 35, 37, 39, 40, 54, and 55.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal Allowance. A Notice of Allowance for Claims 7-15, 22-27, 34-40, and 53-55 is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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